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Senate bans household products containing mercury

LANSING – A package of bills passed the Senate today that would ban the sale, distribution and use of certain household products containing mercury, said Sen. Patty Birkholz.

“Mercury is a dangerous chemical that has harmful, long-term effects on humans who come in contact with it,” said Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township. “Eliminating mercury-filled products will create safer home environments for adults and children and protect them from the hazardous substance. There are alternative products today that are much safer and also more environmentally friendly.”

Senate Bill 124, sponsored by Birkholz, would ban the sale and distribution of home thermostats containing mercury beginning Jan. 1, 2009. This ban would not apply to thermostats used in manufacturing processes.

Other bills in the package would:

- prohibit the sale and use of blood pressure devices that contain mercury. The sale of the devices would be banned beginning Jan. 1, 2008 and their use would be discontinued Jan. 1, 2009;
- prevent the sale or distribution of an esophageal dilator or gastrointestinal tube containing mercury unless it is required by federal law, or the only mercury-added component is a button battery; and
- require the state of Michigan to consider purchasing alternative products that do not contain mercury.

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